First Steps

April, 2003 Issue #1

Towards a National Literacy Electronic Network and Conferencing System

"An electronic infrastructure does for the literacy community what the railway did for this nation. It links scattered communities and maximizes opportunities to share resources and ideas."

National Literacy Secretariat, 1997
Budget 1997: Implications for Literacy in Canada
Ottawa, ON: National Literacy Secretariat

The "First Steps" project is determining the feasibility and affordability of creating a national literacy electronic conferencing system.

Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, "First Steps" is undertaking a process of research, consultation with the field, and strategic planning that will evaluate different options and recommend a possible solution.

This process will build on a history of collaboration and lessons learned and on existing knowledge, experience and research.

A report will be produced in June 2003 for distribution and discussion within the Canadian literacy community.

In the meantime, check us out on the internet at www.nald.ca/firststeps/.

First Steps Partners

Centre AlphaPlus Centre
AlphaPlus operates AlphaCom, a bilingual electronic discussion system for the literacy community in Ontario.
www.alphaplus.ca

eLit.ca
A cooperative among the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, and Literacy Partners of Manitoba, eLit.ca offers electronic conferencing for the literacy community in the prairie provinces.
www.elit.ca

The Hub
A partnership between Literacy BC and Capilano College, The Hub offers electronic conferencing for the BC literacy community.
www.literacy.bc.ca
[Electronic Conferencing Network]

The National Adult Literacy Database
NALD provides information and resources, including listserves, to the Canadian literacy community in both official languages.
www.nald.ca

The Northwest Territories Literacy Council / North of 60
The NWT Literacy Council uses the Government of the NWT North of 60 electronic conferencing system to provide services to the NWT literacy community.
www.nwt.literacy.ca/N60/n60_1.htm#find

NWT Literary Council

About the First Steps Research

Prospect Point Consulting Inc. is beginning research on behalf of the "First Steps" Steering Committee in April, 2003

The research will:

- Describe and evaluate existing systems.
- Determine whether the best way to create a national system would be to build upon what already exists, modify what exists, or create something new.
- Develop a complete understanding of the technical issues, the costs of building and running a national system, and the benefits of a national system.
- Anticipate all the ways in which a national system will affect current and potential stakeholders within the literacy community.

The research process will include:

- Interviews and focus groups with members of the Canadian literacy community.
- A web-based survey.

We will keep you posted on the progress of the research by distributing another information sheet in May. For further information, contact any of the Steering Committee members or:

Sandy Middleton
Project Manager
c/o Literacy BC
Phone: 604-684-0624
Fax: 604-684-8520
Email: smiddleton@literacy.bc.ca

Benefits of Electronic Conferencing

Electronic conferencing provides creative, powerful and accessible ways to:

- Collaborate and participate in new forums for discussion, learning, critical reflection, professional development and training.
- Share ideas and build knowledge about practice and research.
- Build relationships, community, and networks.
- Reduce isolation, duplication, and redundancy.
- Distribute resources and information.
- Plan and facilitate group work.

We Want to Hear from You

We encourage you to complete our web-based survey by April 30, 2003. You will find the survey at:

www.nald.ca/firststeps/

The First Steps Steering Committee

Centre AlphaPlus Centre
Linda Monteith, Executive Director
lmonteith@alphaplus.ca
1-800-788-1120

eLit.ca
Marnie Schaetti, Executive Leadership Team
Literacy Alberta
marnie_schaetti@eLit.ca
403-297-4969

The Hub
Linda Mitchell, Executive Director
Literacy BC
lmitchell@literacy.bc.ca
604-684-0624
1-800-663-1293 (toll-free in BC)

The National Adult Literacy Database
Charles Ramsey, Executive Director
ramseyc@nald.ca
1-800-720-6253